

U.S. Appln. No. 09/819,244
Reply to Office Action dated November 15, 2005

PATENT
450100-01099

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-9 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 6, 7 and 9 are hereby amended. Claims 1, 7 and 9 are independent. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification, and specifically at pages 11-18. No new matter has been introduced. Changes to claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicant is entitled.

Claim 6 has been amended, thereby obviating the 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph rejection.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-3, 5 and 7-9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,640,301 to Ng (hereinafter, merely "Ng"), in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,327,656 to Zabetian (hereinafter, merely "Zabetian"), and in further view of Official Notice.

Claim 1, recites *inter alia*:

"A communication contents certification system:

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the electronic mail is transmitted from a party communication terminal to at least one of an attorney communication terminal and another of the party communication terminals such that the electronic mail is routed to the communication contents certification apparatus and the communication contents certification apparatus obtains authentication information for the electronic mail, which comprises an identification and a password of a party sending the electronic mail, and stores the contents of the electronic mail, and the contents certification apparatus authenticates the electronic mail based on the identification and the password of the party sending the electronic mail,

a reply message in response to a received electronic mail transmission is prepared with reference to a comment provided from one of said two or more attorney communication terminals..." (emphasis added)

As understood by Applicant, Ng relates to certification and authentication of emails by an authentication service. The authentication service is integrated with an email web site that allows users to set up email accounts. Outgoing email from the email web site is routed to the authentication service. A message identifier (ID) is generated and added to the message within markers. A random-number generator creates random pad characters that are added to the message before a checksum is generated. The email with the message ID in the markers but without the pad characters or checksum is sent to the recipients, along with instructions on how to authenticate the message. Others can authenticate a message by emailing it to the authentication service. The message ID is extracted from the markers and pad characters are again added to the message, and a new checksum generated. Authentication fails when the checksums do not match.

As understood by Applicant, Zabetian relates to time-stamping and verifying time-stamps for documents transmitted using network resources. Pursuant to a request to certify a document, a digital signature is extracted from the document. The digital signature corresponds to the content of the document and is unique. A certification provider maintains the

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digital certification signature, an identification code such as a serial number, and other information such as the time and date of certification. The certification can be used to provide an electronic timestamp for a document, thus providing proof of possession of the document at the time of certification.

It is respectfully submitted that Ng and Zabetian, taken alone or in combination do not teach or suggest the above-identified features of claim 1. Specifically, Ng and Zabetian fail to teach a communication contents certification system wherein a reply message in response to a received electronic mail transmission is prepared with reference to a comment provided from one of said two or more attorney communication terminals, as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 1 is patentable.

Independent claims 7 and 9 are method and computer-readable medium claims that include the corresponding authentication and charging features discussed above and are believed patentable for similar reasons.

Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 1, 7 and 9 are patentable

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

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CONCLUSION

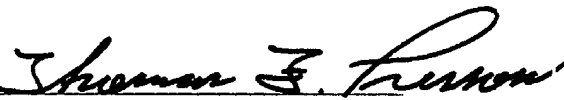
In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited references it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference, or references, providing the basis for a contrary view.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicant respectfully requests early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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